

TAKE NOTHING

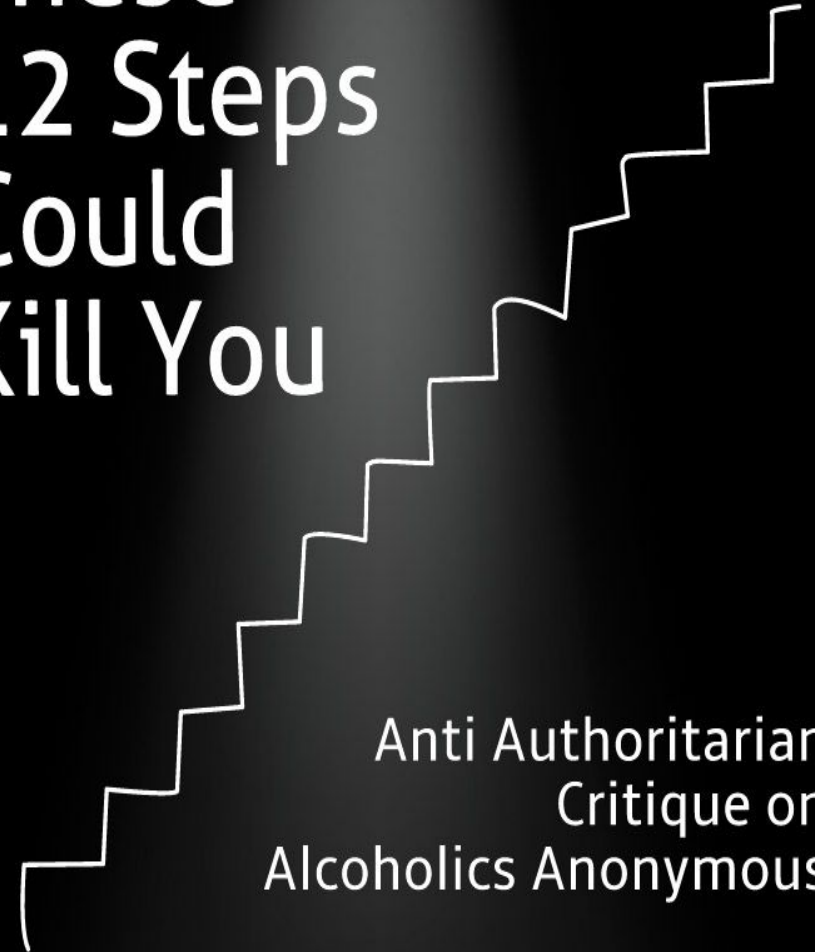


LEAVE EVERYTHING



Green House Distro

These
12 Steps
Could
Kill You



Anti Authoritarian
Critique on
Alcoholics Anonymous

Introduction

Everyday 130 people die from an opioid overdose. Since 2010 the number of overdoses has increased every year. There has been talk and a lot of action within the anarchist milieu centered on harm reduction (needle exchange, narcon). There has been many critiques on the states violent response to the crisis using incarceration and brut police force instead of RECOVERY. But, there has been little talk about RECOVERY and how it operates and functions as an institution and how that institution affects the individual seeking relief from their addiction.

This zine is written for those who share an anti-authoritarian and anti-civilization perspective. If you are seeking help from your addiction and find yourself sitting in A.A. or other 12 step meetings thinking this is absolute bullshit. You are not the only one. There are many people who have overcome addiction outside of A.A. but you will almost never hear their stories. This zine sets out to describe the purpose and functionality of A.A. in our society as well as a brief history of its origins. There is also a personal account included as well as thoughts for dealing with addiction. There are no simple answers. No one size fits all solutions. Recovery from addiction is a personal journey for each and every individual.

Functionality of Institutionalized Recovery (A.A.)

Alcoholics Anonymous and its twelve step program is the main and predominant system for recovery from drugs and alcohol and has been so for over fifty years. Alcoholics Anonymous has been integrated into the courts, prisons, is backed by the majority of medical professionals, can be found in 95% of treatment facilities (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration estimates that the market for addiction treatment is about \$35 billion per year) and frequently appears in movies and t.v. shows. A.A. meeting are held in church basements around the world in nearly every country. In 2016 A.A. estimated its membership to be close to two million. Their textbook is one of the bestselling books of all time selling over 30 million copies.

A.A. has a troubling history and the evangelical cult origins are rarely spoken about. Little to nothing has changed in the program since 1939. There is nothing scientific about the program it does not treat addiction but instead displaces addiction. It is based on sin and redemption model that believes in proselytisation and at the same time claims to be non-religious. The program asserts that those

that do not recover were not honest and or did not work the steps thoroughly. It also measures its success rate based on the number of people that get sober not through the number of people that attempt to get sober. Recent studies show that A.A. has only a 5%-8% success rate. Out of 50 treatment methods ranked by the strength of scientific evidence, AA comes in 38th.

A.A. like all other large institutions is a system of control over the individual. The overall function of AA is to take in individuals suffering from stresses induced by society that are malfunctioning and coming into conflict within that system. Then attempt to break the individual down, reprogram them and integrate them back into society under the guise of helping the “suffering alcoholic”.

With ever increasing alienation and discontent the post-modern techno-industrial world robs us of having control over the simplest things in our lives. We are appendages to the machine. The feeling of powerlessness leads to neurosis and for many of us consumption and intoxication becomes the norm. Our civilization is built and run by consumerism the process of extraction and capital. This process is continuously progressing and speeding up with the onslaught of technologies. We are taught and expected to participate in this system through the process of domestication and over socialization. We are free but only free to consume.

The consumption of drugs and alcohol play a key role in helping modify human behavior in our society. It relieves stress and gives people a false sense of control. This allows people to continue functioning within the system and allows the system to increase the levels of stress through more production and further limitations on one's freedom. But when individuals use drugs and alcohol to excess (dropout) and become counterproductive to society the system needs another solution and this is where A.A. comes into the picture.

“New Age spirituality and the countless varieties of “healing” therapies wear thin in their delusional pointlessness. To assert that we can be whole/enlightened/healed within the present madness amounts to endorsing the madness.” -**Anti-Authoritarians Anonymous**

Before A.A. The Oxford Group

The program found its origins in the fundamentalist evangelical christian cult known as the Oxford Group. The Oxford group uses a sin and redemption model with morning meditations and group confessions. The individual is born into sin and must be saved. The Oxford Group believes that all the world's economic problems are caused by the lack of “god control”. "The crisis is fundamentally a moral one. The nations must re-arm morally. Moral recovery is essentially the forerunner of economic recovery."

The Oxford Group's goal was to bring all countries under “god control”. The group saw quite a bit of success until their spokesperson and founder Frank Buchman in 1936 said in an interview after returning home from visiting with the Berlin chapters "I thank heaven for a man like Adolf Hitler, who built a front line of defence against the anti-Christ of Communism."

The Founder and The Disease

The founder of A.A. Bill Wilson a failed stock broker claims to of had a “spiritual awakening” meeting the presence of god after spending time with an Oxford Group member in the Towns hospital (NYC). Wilson was being treated for delirium tremens and prescribed belladonna known to cause hallucinogens. Wilson started off working with the Oxford Group and claims to have wrote the 12 steps himself and said they were “god inspired”. The 12 steps were originally 6 and were taken from the Oxford Group.

While in Towns hospital Bill met with Dr. William D. Silkworth who would contribute the opening chapter to the Big Book (text of A.A.) The Doctor's Opinion - “Silkworth's theory was that alcoholism was a matter of both physical and mental control: a craving, the manifestation of a physical allergy (the physical inability to stop drinking once started) and an obsession of the mind (to take the first drink).” This concept would later be used to call alcoholism and addiction a chronic and progressive brain disease. Silkworth never had any scientific backing for his theory. He just made it up, later adding that the condition was incurable and that drinking in moderation was impossible for an alcoholic. He never offered data or evidence to confirm any of it. The "chronic brain disease" was widely publicized by the National Institute on Drug Abuse. In 1956, the American Medical Association named alcoholism a disease.

However there are many other medical professionals calling the disease model into question. There was the *Robins study of Vietnam veterans* published in 1974 this study looked at veterans who had used opioids overseas during the Vietnam War but when they returned home many never used opioids again. There is also the countless number of smokers who smoke for decades then decide to quit. If the disease model was true then how do so many people simply walk away from their disease? Dr. Lance Dodes asserts “Addictive episodes in humans are precipitated by psychological factors: loss of relationships, humiliations, grief, loss of self-esteem and so on.” He says our addictions are compulsions and our compulsions are triggered when we feel like our lives are out of control. When people attend A.A. they simply displace their addiction from drinking to smoking cigarettes and drinking coffee, ext.

The Big Book also claims that alcoholism is caused by a spiritual malady. “Selfishness—self-centeredness! That, we think, is the root of our troubles. Driven by a hundred forms of fear, self-delusion, self-seeking, and self-pity, we step on the toes of our fellows and they retaliate.” Similar to the Oxford Group Alcoholics Anonymous places blame and shame on the individual but at the same time tells them it's not your fault you have a progressive disease and vehemently ignores all social construction that make up our world. They claim the only solution to this problem is to live one's life under “God Control” and by helping the still suffering alcoholic and by sharing the message.

Bill Wilson had many affairs while married. He tried to divorce his wife but was overcome by objections from A.A. trustees and renegotiated his royalty agreements with them in 1963, which allowed him to leave 10% of his estate to his girlfriend and 90% to his wife. In 1971 Wilson died from emphysema caused by his addiction to cigarettes. On his deathbed Wilson demanded to have whiskey and became belligerent when refused.

“AA shares the view that acceptance of one's inherent limitations is critical to finding one's proper place among other humans and God. Such ideas are described as "Counter-Enlightenment" because they are contrary to the Enlightenment's ideal that humans have the capacity to make their lives and societies a heaven on earth using their own power and reason.”

-Wikipedia

Personal Account

The first thing you learn when entering a meeting is that the individual is powerless over alcohol. For example if you have one drink or even one sip then you are “off to the races” another saying is “one is too many and a thousand is never enough”. They will also say if you are not convinced of this then you should go try some more controlled drinking. These saying are meant to scar you into staying sober and this may work for some people for some period of time. But, if you truly believe that your powerless and your “disease” is “doing push ups in the parking lot” (they really fucking say this). Then if and when you relapse you will most likely say “Fuck It! I’m powerless my disease is kicking my ass. I might as well burn my fucking life to the ground.” The best part is you don’t have to take responsibility. It’s not your fault it’s your disease.

Relapse in the program is something that is frowned upon and there are consequences. Members keep track of their sobriety by counting days. The amount of days is celebrated by picking up chips, medallions or a recognition by standing up in front of the group. Anniversaries are celebrated with a party and cake (oh they can never get enough sugar, coffee and nicotine). Many times people are asked to speak to let the group know “how they did it”. Ones length of sobriety is a determining factor for their social standing in the group. When someone relapses they have to start all over. They will be required to pick up a white chip a “sign of surrender” in front of the group. Then they will start doing “90 in 90” that means ninety meetings in ninety days. They might even be asked to stop sponsoring anyone that they may be sponsoring. They may be asked to stay out of relationships for a year and they will definitely be asked to do the steps over again. Back to picking up cigarette butts in the parking lot, cleaning coffee pots and being a greeter. No more leading meetings or being called on to share you “experience strength and hope” you will be sitting in the beginner meetings and told to “sit down and shut up” “keep it simple stupid” and “take the cotton out of your ears and stick in in your mouth”.

Alcoholics Anonymous will say there are “no must only recommendations” and “take what you want and leave the rest” but try going to meetings and doing only the things you want. You will quickly see how welcomed you are. Just like all large groups the more of an individual you are the more you will find yourself on the outside. At first you my not mind but after some time you will start to truly

dislike feeling on the outside. After all you are only going to A.A. because you are suffering from addiction and you are starting to think it may actually fucking kill you unless you are able to get help. You’re here because you want help! So, you try to conform. You go to meetings everyday. You ask a stranger to sponsor you. You buy a fucking “Big Book” and a daily meditation book. You start to pretend that you believe. But your sponsor isn't buying it. They want you to believe you are powerless not only over alcohol and drugs but also people, places and thing. They wants you to “come to believe that a power greater than yourself can restore you to sanity”. Then they want you to turn your will and life over to that power but first they want you to sit at a table with the big book opened in front of both of you and pray. Then they will want you to do a “searching and fearless moral inventory” with him. This is where you share your darkest memories and there is also a sex inventory. You are asked to find where you are wrong and what part you played in that dark moment. Then you will have to make amends to all those you wronged. I have heard sponsors telling their sponsies that they must file Chapter 13 bankruptcy instead of Chapter 7. “This is a program of rigorous honesty” you must pay everyone back if you want to stay sober. I have seen someone six months sober barely able to stand on their feet crying saying they are 80,000 dollars in debt to their creditors and old employers. I was told by my sponsor I resented capitalism I responded “I resent capitalism like I resent breathing polluted air. I have no FUCKING part to play in this and I don't owe anyone any FUCKING amends!”

Oh, I almost forgot.... You have to go to meeting forever “meeting makers make it”. When I say forever I mean for the rest of your life. When people miss a few meeting they will say things like “got to get to a meeting starting to feel kind of squarely”. I was told by my sponsor that “the hand of A.A. must always be there and for that I am responsible”. They told me I had to be there to help even my worst enemy. It did not matter what someone did to me I had to be there to help. What a load of shit! I was also told to meet people at meeting and share my number with them and to call someone everyday. One of the first people I shared my number with was a guy who seemed pretty nice. My wife had seen him jogging on the greenway. The next morning at 5am I received a text about the BLOOD OF CHRIST then for the next five minutes message after message came pouring into my phone.

For the most part each meeting is slightly different. Each meeting or “Group” as they call it is autonomous and self supporting. This allows each group to adjust

itself to its members. This helps A.A. from being tied down to criticism. It is similar to the concept protestants use with having your own personal relationship with Jesus. When I talk critical about A.A. to people in A.A. they will say “well that’s not the way I see A.A. maybe you had a bad sponsor or went to the wrong meeting.”

No matter what meeting you go to the functionality of A.A. is always the same. The more welcoming they are, the more people they can get to attend, the more diverse the better. This is why they have you choose a god of your understanding. This is why they have the big book and not the *King James Bible*. It's all in an effort to grow their numbers. A.A. has been more successful at bringing the masses under god control then the Oxford Group could have ever hoped for.

A.A. overall functionality is to re-domesticate the individual so they can be put back in the herd. As an anarchist this is why A.A. will never work for me. I can’t help but want to rebel against it and burn it to the ground. It reminds me of why I have a problem with large groups with members that are over-socialized. There is no place in a large groups for an individual.

Thoughts on RECOVERY

I have been able to take back control of my life using my own agency. I find myself wanting to get wasted when my life seems out of control. When I have no choice in a situation. Being able to choose to get wasted gives me a sense of control. I can even think to myself “next tuesday I’ll get wasted” and all of a sudden I won’t feel so powerless over a situation. I feel a sense of relief but once I decide to get wasted it is very hard to turn back. Addiction is only a symptom of the larger picture. So, by being able to identify why I want to get wasted - a lack of control over my life. I then can reach out to someone close to me and tell them why I feel a lack of control. Usually just doing this will keep me from wanting to get wasted. If addiction is fueled by feeling powerless then RECOVERY should be about empowering one’s self to take back control over their life.

I try to also keep in mind the things I love in my life and the things I love, do not coincide with getting wasted. I have an amazing relationship with my partner. I am part of a kick ass affinity group. I wake up feeling great. The less I need the more free I am. I would rather feel good or ok all the time then feel amazing now and shitty tomorrow. I have had times that I could drink a beer or two and put it down but when I am active in my addiction I feel sick. It’s like walking down the

street with a broken nose I can do it but it would feel a lot better if I took care of it and allowed it to heal. I can go out and get wasted that’s my choice but I choose to take care of myself.

I suggest finding others you share an affinity with and start doing things that empower you! Form a study group, gang, band, serve food under the banner Food Not Bombs, go hiking and forage for food, if you live in an urban area steal food or go dumpster diving (there is nothing more empowering than obtaining food that you need to survive without exchanging a portion of your life for it), sleep out under the stars, explore how deep your relationships can go. If you need and want to quit your job, quit your job! If someone is fucking with you tell them to fuck off. Build things that you have always wanted to build and destroy the things that destroy you. Once you move away from your addiction you’re free to fully experience your life. Getting closer to freedom means first freeing yourself from the thing you do not need or want. Consumption beyond your needs is a slow road through misery, pain and death.

If you are all alone and need support and don’t have others you share an affinity with. There are other support groups that are not A.A. or 12 step programs. I briefly went to *SMART RECOVERY* which is secular and scientifically-based, using cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) and non-confrontational motivational methods. They have a large presence online with videos and plenty of material to read. They also have meetings in most cities. There is no higher power, no admitting your powerless and they ask that you stop going to meetings once you feel better and start living your life and it’s free.

If you have the means to see a psychotherapist try finding one that does not support the 12 step method. We are all pretty scared from living in this set of living arrangements we call civilization. We could all use all the help we can get.

CAUTION: Beware of Treatment Facilities!

95% are 12 step based. That means they drop you off at a FREE A.A. meeting everyday. Almost all treatment programs cost \$1,000 a day and you have to attend a minimum of 28 days. That is \$28,000!!! Some even go as high as \$50,000. If you must go to treatment do your research or ask someone you trust to help find you a place to go.

